DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 122 356 EA 008 085

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TITLE A Study of Leadership as Interaction.
PUB DATE Apr 76
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, California, April 19-23, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Analysis of Variance; *Cultural Factors; Elementary Secondary Education; Factor Analysis; Individual Power; Interaction; *Interaction Process Analysis; *Leadership; Leadership Qualities; *Leadership Styles; Models; Principals; Role Perception; Social Status; Statistical Analysis; Teachers

ABSTRACT

The study examined leadership in schools as interaction between principals and teachers. The leadership process was conceptualized as the exercise of influence. The concept of ascriptive status was utilized to describe women as atypical and men as typical principals. Teachers responded to protocols depicting leader influence and cultural status. Results were analyzed using factorial analysis of variance. The findings suggested a reconceptualization of leadership as interactive behavior in which organizational outcomes are a function not only of the exercise of influence but also of the status of the leader as perceived by organizational members and the status and background of those members. (Author)

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A STUDY OF LEADERSHIP AS INTERACTION

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AERA Session 12.16 Small Roundtables (Division A)

EA 008 085

A STUDY OF LEADERSHIP AS INTERACTION

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Leadership has been viewed from three major perspectives: as individual traits, as situational properties, and as interactive behaviors. Gouldner (1950) examined the research based on the first two earlier perspectives and found the results inconsistent and atomistic.[1] The third perspective views leadership as interactive behaviors between those who exert influence and those on whom influence is exerted. In an organizational context, leadership continues to be defined as influencing individual and group behavior.[2] With organizational leadership thus defined, French (1974) noted definite congruencies among the notions of contemporary behavioral scientists about differing leadership patterns and the consequences to those patterns for individual and organizational goals.[3]

Among the complex combination of factors which have been studied relative to leadership as interaction, cultural status is one factor which has been given little systematic attention. Cultural status refers to a socially differentiated identity which is assigned to a person and which imputes to that person certain culturally prescribed behaviors. French and Raven (1960) pointed out the critical relationship between cultural status and the perceived rights of leaders to legitimate power.[4] Epstein (1970) also noted that certain statuses are compatible with high office and thereby right and natural.[5]

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study examined leadership in schools as interaction between teachers and principals. In this formulation, leadership becomes a dynamic process which exists when acts of influence based on the power of an actor change the behaviors of others in compliance with the intent of the actor.

As its theoretical base, the study utilized categories of leader influence as conceptualized by French and Raven (1960). These include the following bases of influence as pertaining to an organizational context: (1) reward power, i.e., power based on the organizational members' perceptions of the leader's ability to mediate rewards; (2) coercive power, i.e., power based on the organizational members' perceptions of the leader's ability to dispense punishments; (3) legitimate power, i.e., power based on the organizational members' perceptions of the leader's right to influence them and their own obligation to comply according to internalized values; (4) expert power, i.e., power based on the organizational members' perceptions of the leader's superior knowledge, and (5) referent power, i.e., power based on the organizational members' desires to identify with the leader and to feel a oneness with the leader.[6] Katz and Kahn (1966) suggested that two dimensions over-arch these five bases of influence: (1) supervisory authority which is common to legitimate, reward, and coercive power, and (2) incremental influence which is common to referent and expert power.[7]

At the same time, the study recognized that cultural norms exist which prescribe differential behaviors for men and women (Mead, 1935).[8] In Western cultures, men as managers and providers, and women as helpmates and homemakers are dominant cultural images. Cultural norms for occupations also bear directly on positions of leadership in

organizations to the extent that men more typically occupy leadership positions and women less typically so.[9] This extends to schools where women dominate the teaching ranks, but where men occupy a majority of the principalships. Hence, in its investigation of leadership in schools, the study defined typical principals as men and atypical principals as women.

Atypical leaders were further identified as those whose social identities are culturally prescribed to the extent that an ascriptive status dominates their interpersonal organizational relationships. The study defined ascriptive status as the social status irrelevant in a given context and suggested that sex exemplified ascriptive status.[10] The study also drew on Gouldner's (1957) discussion of social identities which suggested that when organizational members orient themselves to another's social identity, one which is not organizationally relevant, group behaviors are affected.[11]

Generalizations according to culturally prescribed categories appear to influence the interpersonal perceptual processes of both social[12] and organizational interaction.[13] The perceptual process is described as a series of operations whereby the perceivers organize their interpretations according to prior experiences and attitudes.[14] In short, perceptual processes appear to be a function of socialization.

The study recognized that teachers enter the influence relationship with school principals accompanied by their past experiences, attitudes, and perceptual sets, all of which remain pivotal in the principal/teacher interactive relationship. Two categories of background experiences suggest broad commonalities among teachers: the level taught and the sex of the teacher. The level taught appears to distinguish

between secondary and elementary teachers' attitudes towards school administrators[15] and professional concerns,[16] while early socialization processes provide a general commonality of experience according to the sex of the individual teacher.[17]

Taken together, the theoretical framework suggested that the relationship between school principals and teachers is in part a function of the influence base employed (incremental influence or supervisory authority), the cultural status of the principal (typical or atypical), and the perceptions of teachers relative to socialization experiences (elementary and secondary) as well as to their own cultural status (men and women).

HYPOTHESES

The following relationships were hypothesized between and among the variables as identified above.

Hypothesis 1. There will be no significant difference in the degree of teacher compliance to school principals exercising incremental influence and to school principals exercising supervisory authority.

Hypothesis 2. There will be no significant difference in the degree of teacher compliance to the influence of typical principals and the influence of atypical principals.

Hypothesis 2.1. There will be no significant difference in the degree of teacher compliance to the influence of typical and atypical principals when both exercise incremental influence.

Hypothesis 2.2. There will be no significant difference in the degree of teacher compliance to the influence of typical and atypical principals when both exercise supervisory authority.

Hypothesis 3.1. There will be no significant difference between elementary and secondary teachers in their degree of compliance to the influence of typical principals.

Hypothesis 3.2. There will be no significant difference between elementary and secondary teachers in their degree of compliance to the influence of atypical principals.

Hypothesis 3.3. There will be no significant difference between men and women teachers in their degree of compliance to the influence of typical principals.

Hypothesis 3.4. There will be no significant difference between men and women teachers in their degree of compliance to the influence of atypical principals.

Hypothesis 4.1. There will be no significant difference in the degree of teachers' scaled responses to the exercise of incremental influence when three scales present the following semantic differentials: open-closed, flexible-inflexible, and accepting-rejecting.

Hypothesis 4.2. There will be no significant difference in the degree of teachers' scaled responses to the exercise of supervisory authority when three scales present the following semantic differentials: open-closed, flexible-inflexible, and accepting-rejecting.

Hypothesis 4.3. There will be no significant difference in the degree of teachers' scaled responses to the influence of typical principals when three scales present the following semantic differentials: changeable-stable, dependent-independent, and passive-active.

Hypothesis 4.4. There will be no significant difference in the degree of teachers' scaled responses to the influence of atypical principals when three scales present the following semantic differentials: changeable-stable, dependent-independent, and passive-active.

Statistical significance at the .05 level was required for the rejection of each hypothesis.

METHOD

The study utilized an experimental methodology in examining the relationships between and among variables. Four written protocols were generated to depict leader influence. The protocols were identical insofar as they each presented the same compliance-inducing situation. The protocols varied according to the base of influence used and the status of the school principal. The variance is illustrated in Figure 1.

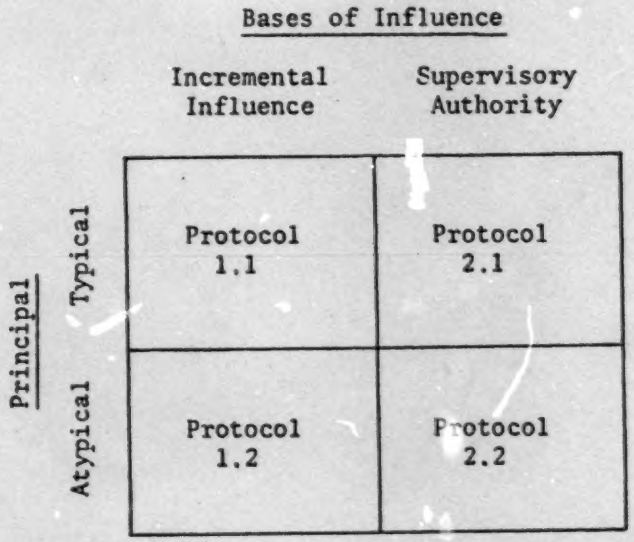


Figure 1. Variance Among Protocols According to Base of Influence and Status of Principal

Careful attention was given to the content and wording of the protocols in light of communications and linguistic research, with the purpose of providing clarity, reliability, and ease of interpretation. A situation was presented in which a school principal was attempting to influence a teacher's participation in a school project. Respondents were asked to imagine themselves in the situation as described and to respond on a seven-point scale as to the likelihood of their compliance with the principal's request. Six semantic differential scales were included and respondents were asked to rate the principal depicted. Three of these scales were based on bi-polar adjectives descriptive of leadership: open-closed, flexible-inflexible, accepting-rejecting; and three were based on bi-polar adjectives descriptive of sex differences: stable-changeable, dependent-independent, and passive-active. The protocols were piloted with 23 public school teachers for the purpose of establishing their adequacy as measuring instruments relative to form and content.

A stratified, randomized sample of 300 public school teachers was selected from a pool totaling 3,018. A second level of randomization took place as each teacher was randomly assigned one of the four protocols within each strata. Two hundred forty teachers completed and returned the instruments. This represented an 80 percent rate of return.

Analysis of compliance data utilized multiple-c tests and factorial analysis of variance. Analysis of semantic differential data employed simple mean difference relative to hypothesized relationships, profile patterns, and correlations of distance-cluster analyses.

FINDINGS

Multiple Comparisons Between Means for Compliance. Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, and t values for each hypothesized comparison relative to compliance ratings by teachers. The multiple-t tests employed the Bonferroni t,[18] alternatively know as Dunn's multiple comparison procedure,[19] to extablish a multiple confidence level. Mean teacher compliance ratings for the exercis of incremental influence was significantly higher than the mean ratings for the exercise of supervisory authority. The remaining sets of comparisons yielded no signifcant t values.

Factorial Analysis of Variance. Table 2 presents the factorial analysis of variance for compliance ratings. All four main effects and two of the first order interactions between variables were found to be significant. Figure 2a and 2b illustrate the significant first order interactions. Comparisons between means for each of the sixteen cells of the factorial table were made utilizing the Newman-Keuls procedure. Forty-three significant differences resulted and are shown in Table 3.

Analysis of the Semantic Differential Scales. Figure 3 presents mean teacher responses for the six semantic differential scales. In discussing analysis of semantic differential data, Osgood stated that the significance of "cultural meanings" of group data may be assessed by differences as small as one-half scaled unit, and he suggested that such differences were significant at the .05 level.[20] Utilizing Osgood's criterion, significant differences were noted between teacher responses to incremental influence and to supervisory authority on the three scales for leadership. However, only one scale measuring sex differences showed the same degree of significant difference between typical and atypical principals.

Nevertheless, semantic differences in teacher responses for typical and atypical principals were indicated. The profile patterns, as shown in Figure 4a and 4b, illustrate differential responses to situations which are identical in depicting leadership influence but different in cultural status.

The semantic differential data were further examined for differences and similarities among teacher groups. Distance-cluster analyses were performed and tested for significant differences by correlation coefficients. Table 4 presents those results.

INSERT TABLES AND FIGURES ABOUT HERE.

(The order as cited is: Table 1, Table 2, Figure 2a & 2b, Table 3, Figure 3, Figure 4a & 4b, and Table 4.)

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypotheses. The results of the study clearly suggested that school principals perceived as exercising incremental influence are more likely to obtain the compliance of teachers than principals perceived as employing supervisory authority. Hence, null hypothesis 1 was rejected. Multiple-t tests resulted in insignificant differences in the remaining hypothesized relationships. Thus, null hypotheses 2.0 and 4.4 were tentatively accepted. At the same time, however, a factorial analysis of variance and analyses of the semantic differential scales indicated significant interactions among variables. The results are discussed in the following sections.

Table 1. T Values for Multiple Comparisons Between Means for Compliance

	Hypothesis	Mean	Std Dev.	df	t
1.0	Incremental Influence -	6.125	1.25		
	Supervisory Authority = 0	4.292	2.03	238	8.8133***
2.0	Typical Principal -	5.500	1.75		
	Atypical Principal = 0	4.916	2.04	238	2.3897
2.1	Incremental Influence of Typical Principal -	6.266	1.18		
	Incremental Influence of Atypical Principal = 0	5.983	1.31	118	1.2322
2.2	Supervisory Authority of Typical Principal -	4.733	1.89		
	Supervisory Authority of Atypical Principal = 0	3.850	2.07	118	2.4512
3.1	Elementary Rating of Typical Principal -	5.966	1.45		
	Secondary Rating of Typical Principal = 0	5.033	1.91	118	.6684
3.2	Elementary Rating of Atypical Principal	4.966	3.01		
	Secondary Rating of Atypical Principal = 0	4.866	2.30	118	.2669
3.3	Men Teachers' Rating of Typical Principal -	5.083	1.80		
	Women Teachers' Rating of Typical Principal = 0	5.916	1.44	118	2.7083
3.4	Men Teachers' Rating of Atypical Principal	4.683	2.01		
	Women Teachers' Rating of Atypical Principal = 0	5.150	2.03	118	1.2536

***p < .001

Table 2. Analysis of Variance Table for Compliance

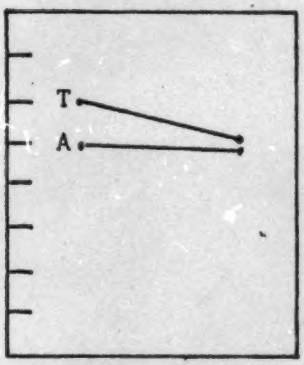
Source		df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Atypical/Typical Principals	(A)	1	20.9785	20.9785	9.3658**
Men/Women Teachers	(B)	1	26.0041	26.0041	11.6095**
Elementary/Secondary Teachers	(C)	1	16.5375	16.5375	7.3831**
Incremental Influence/ Supervisory Authority	(D)	1	199.8375	199.8375	89.2172**
A x B		1	2.2299	2.2299	.9955
A x C		1	10.8631	10.8631	4.8498*
A x D		1	5.7296	5.7296	2.5580
B x C		1	.7045	.7045	.3145
B x D		1	2.6042	2.6042	1.6264
C x D		1	73.7041	73.7041	32.9051**
A x B x C		1	7.6780	7.6780	3.4278
A x B x D		1	3.4782	3.4782	1.5528
A x C x D		1	.0117	.0117	.0052
B x C x D		1	2.2035	2.2035	.9837
A x B x C x D		1	1.8644	1.8644	.8324
Within Groups		224	501.7337	2.2399	
Total		239	876.1625		

*p < .05

**p < .01

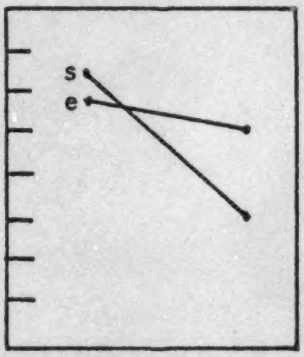
Figures 2a - 2b. Significant First Order Interactions Between Variables

Figure 2a*



	Elem. Teachers	Second. Teachers
Typical (T)	5.98	5.03
Atypical (A)	4.96	4.86

Figure 2b**



	Increm. Influ.	Superv. Author.
Elem. (e)	5.83	5.11
Sec. (s)	6.41	3.48

*$p < .05$

**$p < .01$

Table 3. Newman-Keuls Test of Differences Between Means for Compliance

Variable		ms A X_2	ms T X_2	fs A X_2	fe A X_2	fs T X_2	me A X_2	me T X_2	me A X_1	fe A X_1	me T X_1	ms A X_1	ms T X_1	fs T X_1	fe T X_2	fe T X_1	fs A X_1
Compliance Mean		2.60	3.20	3.86	4.26	4.26	4.66	5.00	5.26	5.66	5.86	6.20	6.26	6.40	6.46	6.53	6.80
ms/A/X_2	2.60				-	*	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
ms/T/X_2	3.20					-	-	*	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
fs/A/X_2	3.86							-	-	*	*	**	**	**	**	**	**
fe/A/X_2	4.26									-	-	*	*	*	**	**	**
fs/T/X_2	4.26										-	*	*	*	**	**	**
me/A/X_2	4.66											-	-	-	-	-	*
me/T/X_2	5.00																-

*p < .05
**p < .01

A = Atypical Principal
T = Typical Principal
X_1= Incremental Influence
X_2= Supervisory Authority

ms = male secondary teachers
fs = female secondary teachers
me = male elementary teachers
fe = female elementary teachers

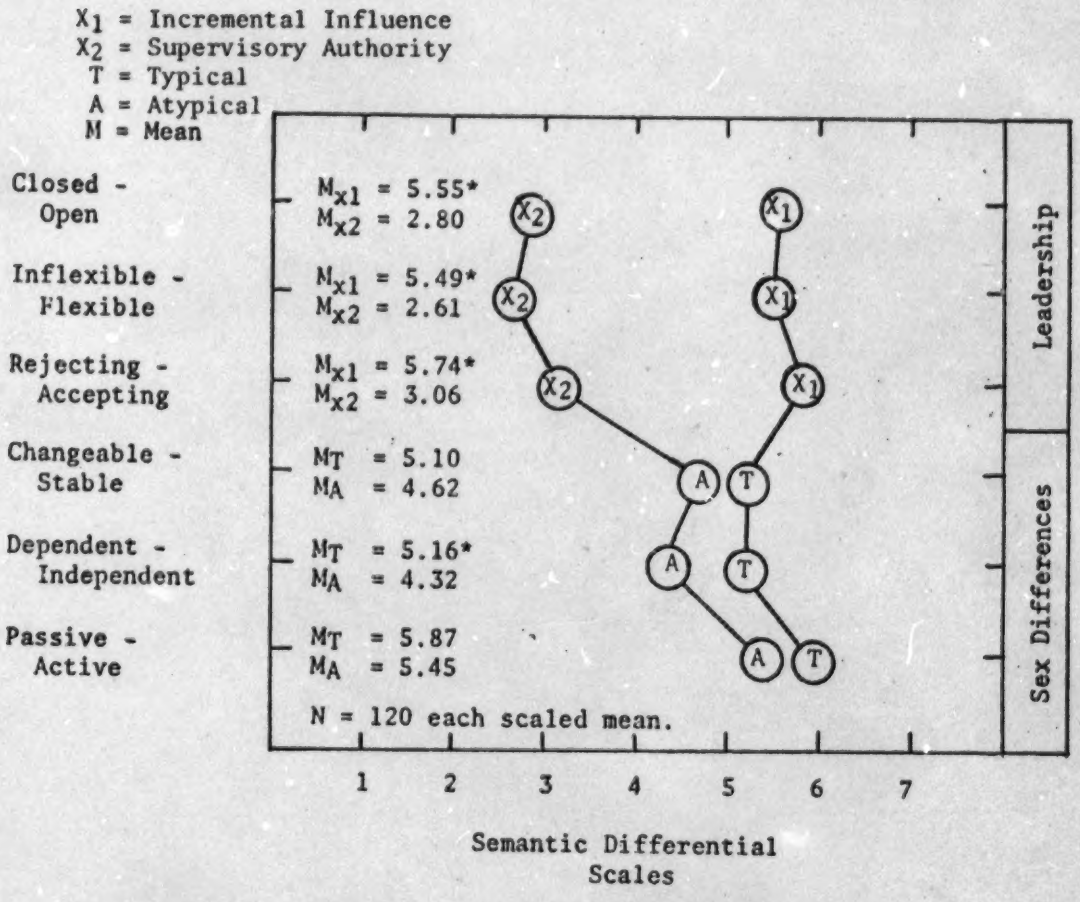


Figure 3. Profiles of Mean Teacher Responses on Scales of Leadership and Sex Difference Factors

*$p < .05$

Figures 4a - 4b. Profile Comparisons of Mean Responses of Teacher Groups to Principals According to Status and Influence

Figure 4a. Ratings by All Teachers*

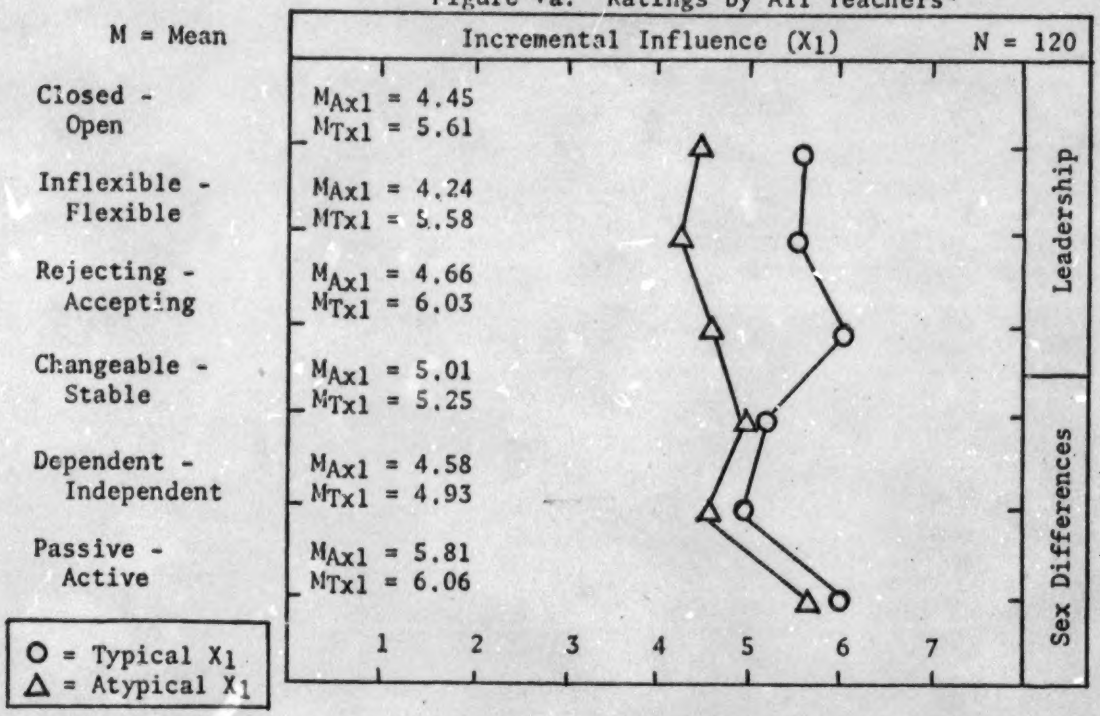
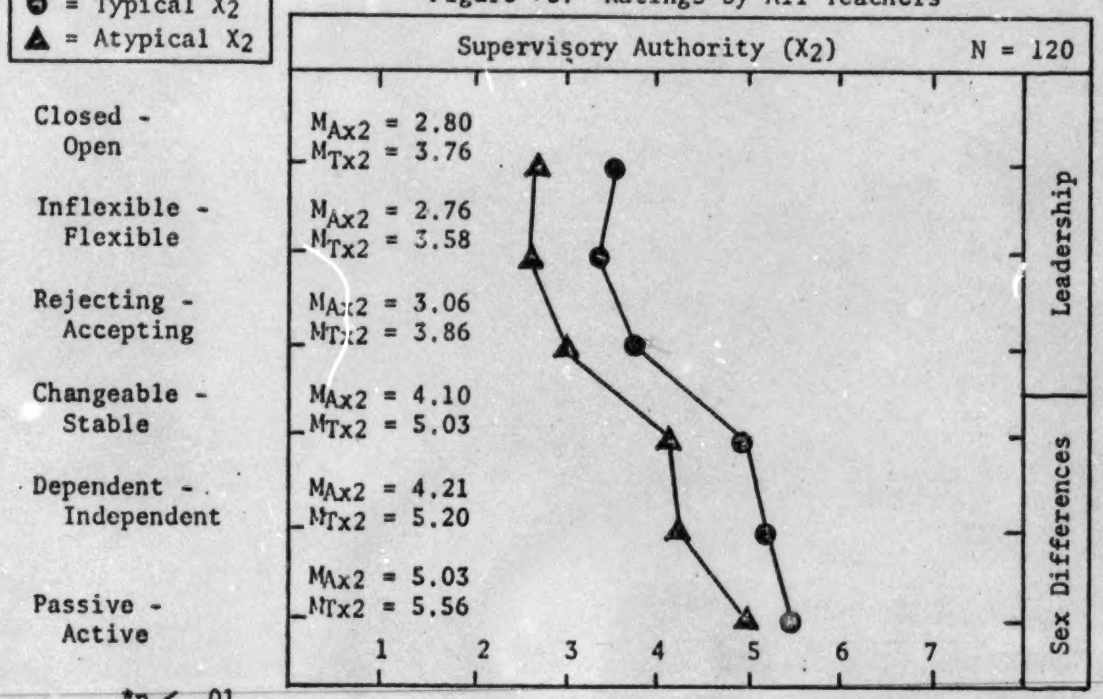


Figure 4b. Ratings by All Teachers*



*$p < .01$

Significance according to the Sign Test of the Profile Pattern.[21]

Table 4. Correlation Coefficients Comparing Concept Clusters of Teacher Groups According to Leadership and Sex Differences

	Elementary Men	Secondary Men	Elementary Women	Secondary Women
		(a) Leadership Scales		
Elementary Men	-	+.2564	-.3642	+.6738
Secondary Men		-	-.9832***	+.9399**
Elementary Women			-	-.6216
		(b) Sex Difference Scale		
Elementary Men	-	-.0241	+.9307**	+.7560
Secondary Men		-	+.2040	+.0234
Elementary Women			-	+.8697*

*$p < .05$

**$p < .01$

***$p < .001$

Findings Relative to Leadership

The findings suggested that when school principals propose to influence the behavior of teachers, they are more likely to be successful if perceived as exercising incremental influence than if perceived as employing supervisory authority. The results further suggested that teachers tend to perceive the principal exercising incremental influence as "open, flexible, and accepting" and to perceive the principal exercising supervisory authority as "closed, inflexible, and rejecting" (Figure 3). These findings reinforced the conceptualization of leadership suggested by Katz and Kahn (1966), who considered incremental influence as the essence of organizational leadership and the focus of effective organizational control.[22]

Findings Relative to the Cultural Status of School Principals

The results of the study suggested that teachers perceive school principals differentially according to their cultural status. This difference was generally at its greatest when typical principals exercise incremental influence and atypical principals exercise supervisory authority (Table 3). However, the difference was also apparent when both types of principals employ the same base of influence. Moreover, teachers tended to evaluate typical principals as "stable, independent, and active" and atypical principals as "changeable, dependent, and passive" (Figure 4a-4b).

Such findings appeared consistent with the literature which proposes that cultural norms exist for differential behaviors according to sex and that individuals not only conduct themselves accordingly, but selectively perceive others in light of those norms. The findings also

supported the notion that ascriptive status is involved in interpersonal organizational interaction and that when organizational members orient themselves to the ascriptive status of leaders, subsequent behaviors are affected.

Findings Relative to Perceptions of Teacher Groups

The results suggested differential teacher perceptions of school principals according to teacher groups.

Men and women teachers. The sex of teachers was a source of significant variance in the study according to the factorial analysis of variance (Table 2). Moreover, the four highest compliance means among the sixteen cells of the factorial design involved women teachers (Table 3). Compliance ratings were higher for women teachers regardless of the status of the principal or the base of influence (Table 1). However, while women teachers' compliance ratings were consistently higher than men teachers' ratings, t values testing differences were just below the .05 level of significance (Table 1).

Elementary and secondary teachers. The responses of teachers appeared to differ more according to the level taught than the sex of teachers. In fact, the findings suggested marked differences between elementary and secondary teachers in their compliance to and evaluations of school principals. Elementary teachers appeared more likely to comply with the influence of typical principals regardless of the influence exercised (Figure 2a). At the same time, secondary teachers appeared more likely to comply with the exercise of incremental influence regardless of the status of the principal (Figure 2b).

The data of the semantic differential scales suggested further differences between elementary and secondary teachers. For example, the meaning of leadership correlated positively and significantly for men and women secondary teachers (Table 4). However, a trend toward negative correlation differentiated the meaning of leadership for elementary men and women. This trend was strengthened when elementary women teachers were compared with all secondary teachers and reached statistical significance when the comparison was made with secondary men only (Table 4). These findings were consistent with research which indicates that teachers respond differentially to the leadership of principals according to the grade level taught.

Implications for a Reconceptualization of Leadership Theory

The present study provided support for the theoretical view of leadership as interaction. From this perspective, leadership has been defined as the interactive process between one who exerts influence and those on whom the influence is exerted. The findings of the study suggested that organizational subordinates, i.e., teachers, view the interaction with organizational superordinates, i.e., school principals, as potentially compliance-inducing. Hence, when influence is exercised, one outcome of the interaction between superordinates and subordinates relates directly to compliance. The degree of compliance granted by the subordinate appeared to be in part a function of the type of influence exercised, i.e., incremental influence or supervisory authority.

The findings of the study further suggested that a second outcome emerges from the interaction between superordinates and subordinates and is germane to the degree of compliance granted. The second outcome relates

directly to the subordinates' perceptions of superordinates as influence is exercised. Hence, it is proposed that leadership as interactive behavior produces both a compliance-inducing and a perception-inducing situation between organizational superordinates and subordinates. Such a suggestion is consistent with French and Raven's (1960) conceptualization of categories of influence and with Katz and Kahn's (1966) discussion of organizational leadership.

Compliance and perceptions have been thus suggested as outcomes of the interaction between superordinates and subordinates when leadership, defined as influence attempts, is exercised. These should, however, be designated as intermediate outcomes, since it is assumed that compliance and perceptions relate directly to broader organizational goals or outcomes, such as organizational effectiveness, morale, commitment, and productivity.

Figure 5 illustrates these relationships. More precisely, the model postulates a direct relationship between the leadership behavior of the superordinate and the degree of compliance and perceptions of the subordinate. Further, the model tentatively suggests a relationship (direction unclear) between compliance and perceptions and more distal organizational outcomes such as effectiveness and morale. Finally, it suggests a relationship between leadership behavior and the same set of long range organizational outputs. Clearly, these posited relationships need to be empirically tested.

Other variables were suggested by the findings of the study as mediating the intermediate outcomes of the leadership process. These factors have been identified as existing cultural norms and socialization processes through which individuals learn to behave and to perceive.

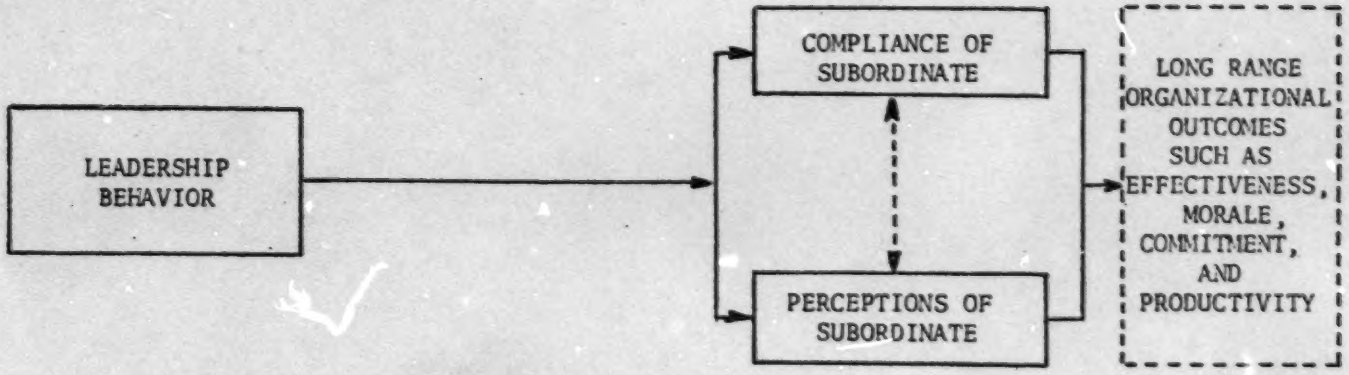

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR
COMPLIANCE OF SUBORDINATE
PERCEPTIONS OF SUBORDINATE
LONG RANGE ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES SUCH AS EFFECTIVENESS, MORALE, COMMITMENT, AND PRODUCTIVITY

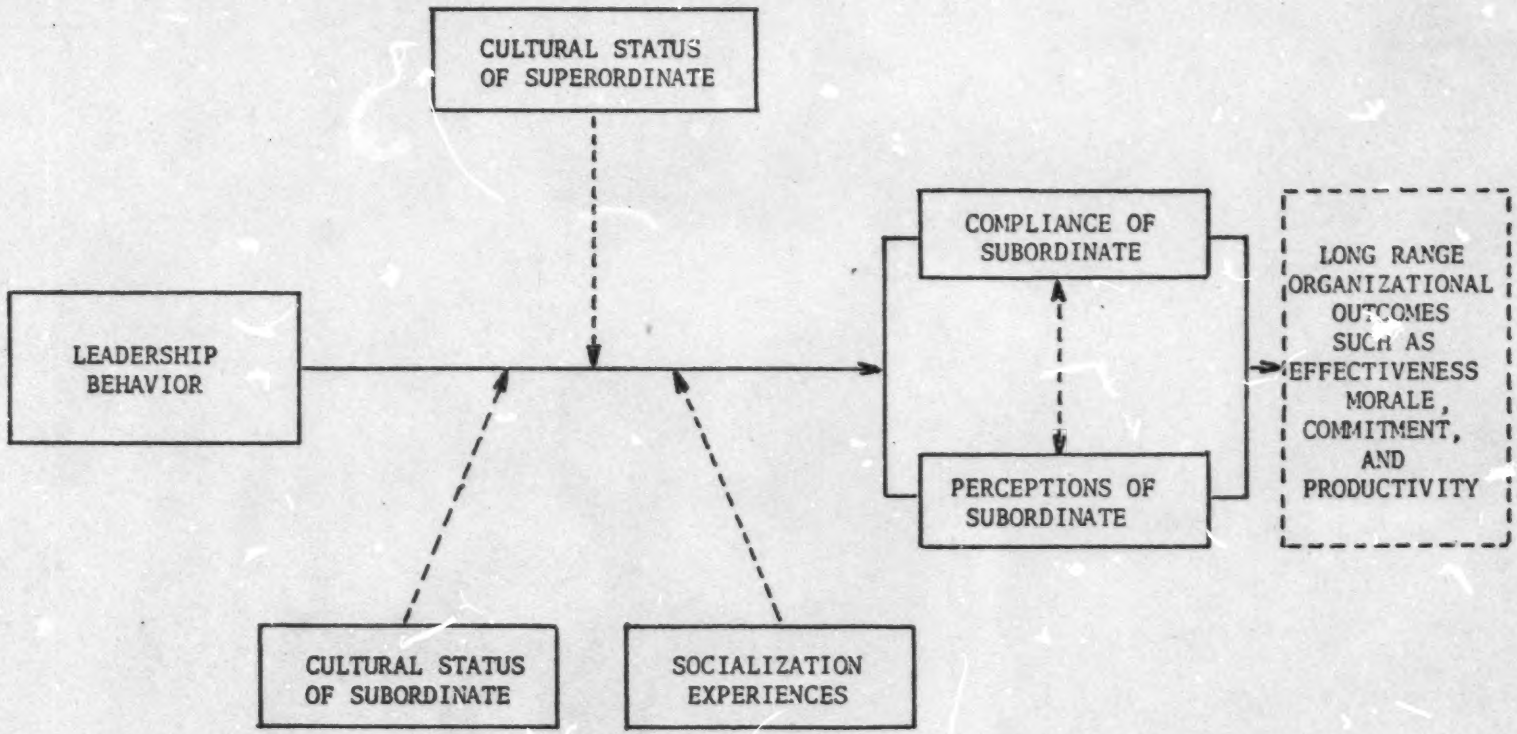
Figure 5. Organizational Outcomes as a Function of Leadership

For example, cultural norms prescribe certain behaviors according to social identity, e.g., sex role. When a leader's social identity is irrelevant in an organizational context, but nevertheless dominates the interpersonal organizational relationships, the outcomes of leadership are apparently affected. The study identified such irrelevant identities as ascriptive statuses. The findings suggested that ascriptive statuses remain as mediating variables when leadership is conceptualized as interactive behaviors.

Another set of mediating variables stemmed from socialization processes. For example, the study suggested that organizational experiences, such as level taught by teachers, provided a background for common viewpoints. The findings indicated that generalizations according to socialization experiences become part of interpersonal perceptions and hence a part of the interactive processes.

Taken together, the findings of the study suggested a reconceptualization of leadership. Reformulated, leadership becomes a dynamic social process, the outcomes of which are a function not only of the leader s behavior, but also of the leader's cultural status and the cultural status and socialization experiences of the subordinate. Figure 6 illustrates such a conceptualization of the process of leadership.

The present study provided support for such a conceptualization of leadership. For example, it was possible to cite limiting cases relative to intermediate outcomes: (1) decreased compliance and negative perceptions of leader behavior, and (2) increased compliance and positive perceptions of leader behavior. From such intermediate outcomes, more long range organizational outcomes may be postulated.


CULTURAL STATUS OF SUPERORDINATE
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LONG RANGE ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES SUCH AS EFFECTIVENESS MORALE, COMMITMENT, AND PRODUCTIVITY
CULTURAL STATUS OF SUBORDINATE
SOCIALIZATION EXPERIENCES

Figure 6. Organizational Outcomes as a Function of Leadership Behavior and Mediating Variables

Figure 7 illustrates a limiting case for the first type as suggested by the study's findings. Antecedent variables included supervisory authority exercised by an atypical principal in order to influence the behavior of a secondary male teacher. Intermediate outcomes included decreased compliance and negative perceptions of leader behavior. Postulated long term outcomes include diminished organizational effectiveness, commitment, morale, and productivity.

In contrast, Figure 8 depicts a limiting case of the second type. It should be noted that the findings of the study suggested several possible combinations of variables. However, the set most consistently predictive of increased compliance and positive perceptions of leaders included the exercise of incremental influence by a typical principal in interaction with a female elementary teacher. Figure 8 also posits productive long range organizational outcomes, e.g., organizational productivity.

SUMMARY

The study examined leadership in schools as interaction between principals and teachers. The findings of the study reinforced the conceptualization of leadership by Katz and Kahn (1966), who consider incremental influence to be the essence of leadership and the focus of organizational control. That is, school principals perceived as exercising incremental influence obtained significantly higher compliance ratings from teachers than principals perceived as exercising supervisory authority.

The results of the study suggested, however, that other variables mediate the outcomes of leader behavior. For example, the findings indicated that teachers tend to perceive principals differentially according to cultural

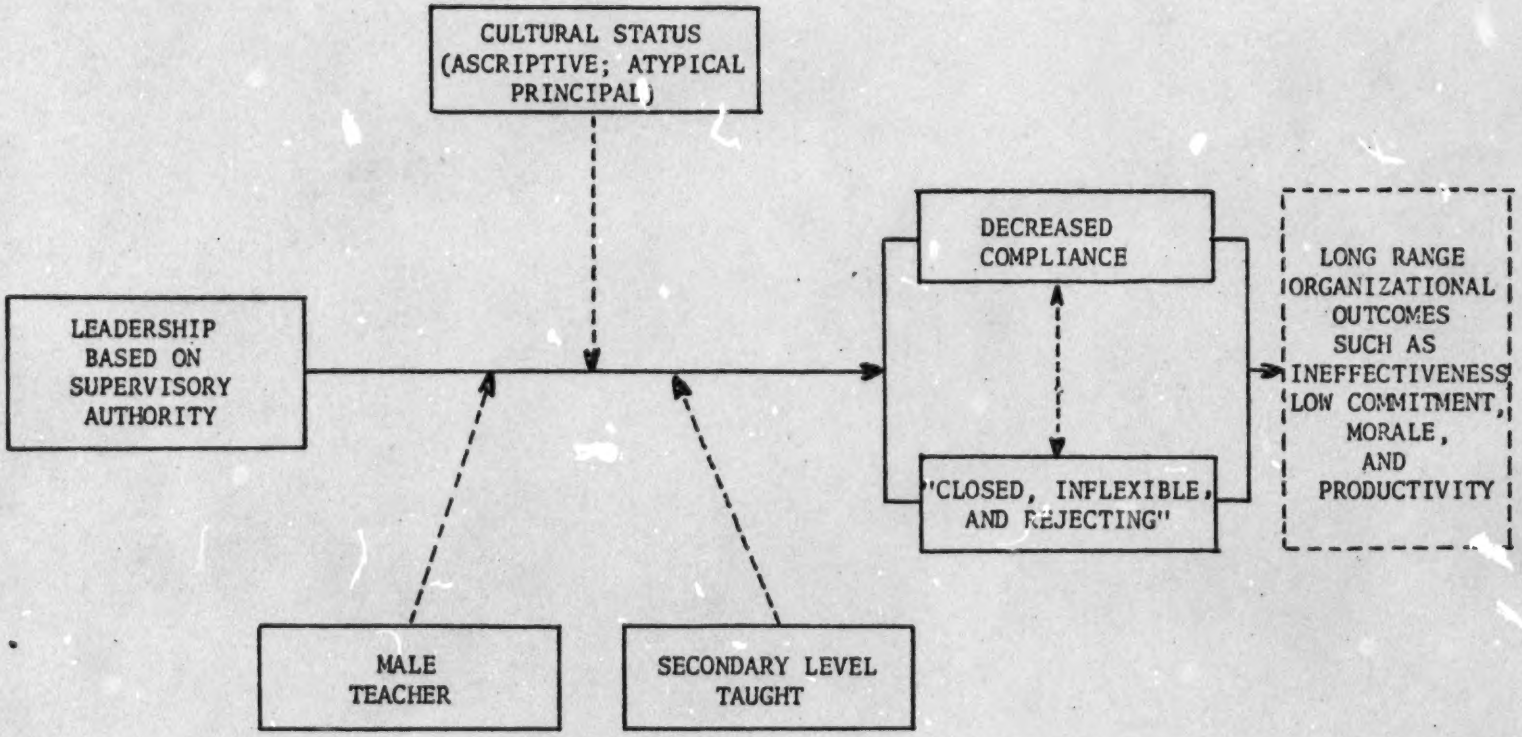

Figure 7. A Limiting Case Postulating Dysfunctional Organizational Outcomes of Leader Behavior

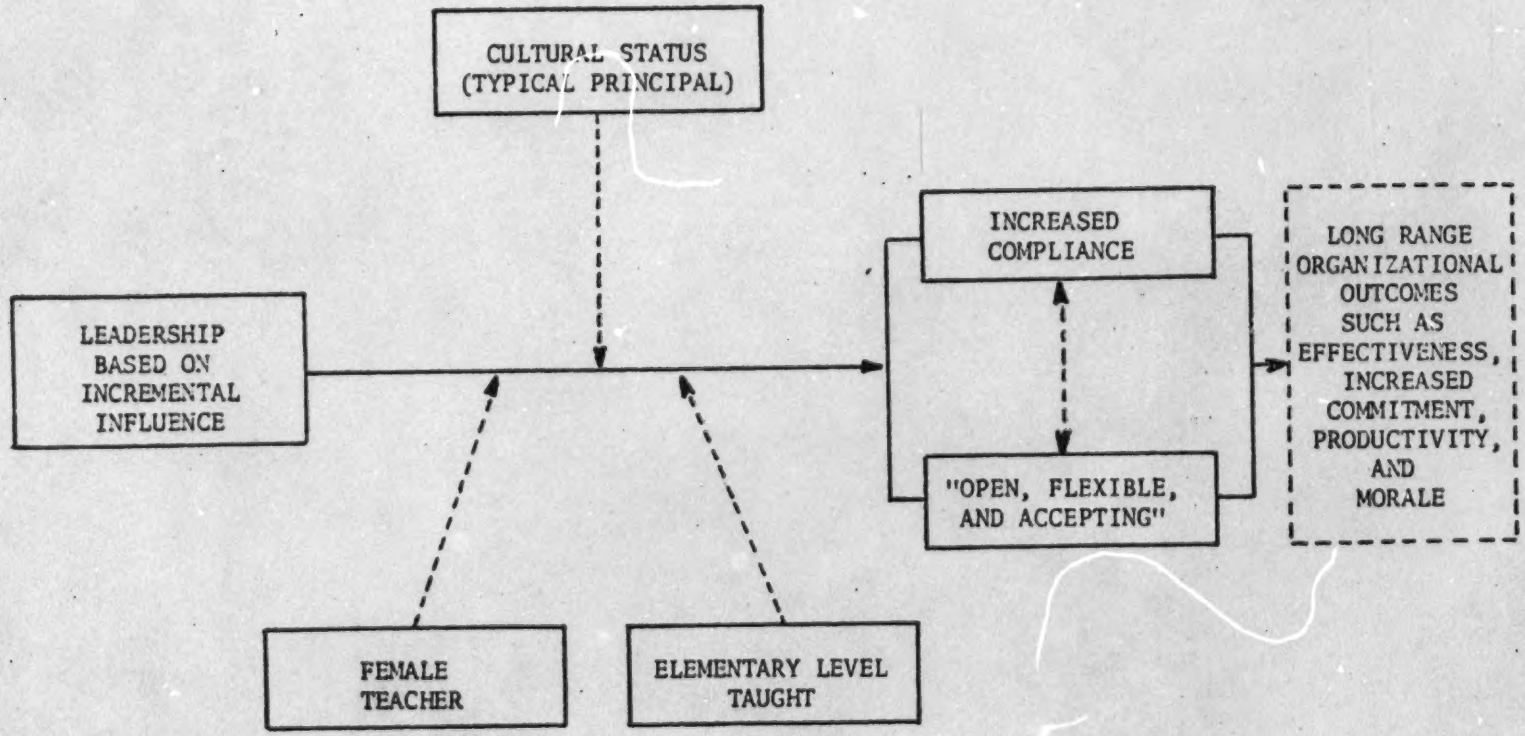

Figure 8. A Limiting Case Postulating Increasingly Functional Organizational Outcomes of Leader Behavior

status and to comply more to the influence of typical principals than atypical principals even when both exercise identical influence behaviors. The findings further suggested differential compliance to and perceptions of principal influence according to the sex of the teacher and the level taught.

The findings of the study implied a reconceptualization of leadership as interactive behavior. In such a formulation, leadership becomes a dynamic process which exists when acts of influence based on the power and perceived status of an actor change the behaviors of others in compliance with the intent of the actor. The findings indicated that the organizational outcomes of the leadership process are a function not only of the exercise of influence, but the status of the leader as perceived by organizational members.

NOTES

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